The Most Amazing Gift My Parents Ever Gave Me

When I was 15-years-old, my parents and I had gone to Toys 'R Us to Christmas shop. Specifically, we were there to find a little, electric-powered car for my 3-year-old nephew, Levi.

My upbringing was not lacking for much of anything materially. By the time I was born to my 36-year-old and 38-year-old parents, they had worked their way up from poverty to becoming very successful home builders and land developers.

There was a lot they taught me about hard work along the way, while also providing me with everything I could ever want and need.

But it was a lesson they taught me this particular Christmas when I was fifteen, in Toys R' Us, that I consider the most valuable life lesson of all, and the greatest gift they ever gave me.

Our shopping cart was already overflowing with the latest and best gifts money could buy as we made our way through the crowds of other parents and kids shopping that season. We were in the electric car isle examining the little cars, which were by far the most expensive, hottest items in the store that year, retailing at about $300.

My parents were debating which car my nephew Levi would like best, when a little family with a boy about the same age as Levi started down the isle. The little boy came leaping up to the cars and hopped in, his face just beaming with joy.

"Wonderful!" My dad exclaimed. "He's just like Levi! We'll let him decide! Which one would you choose, son?"

The little boy just squealed and giggled with sheer joy and boldly stated, "I want THIS one!" As he drove the

shiny, red one down the isle.

My parents just beamed, watching this child's joy over this fancy toy. His parents stood, watching, and as I looked up at them I first noticed that they had only two, small items in their big shopping cart. They were dressed very humbly. You could tell they didn't have very much money.

"Mommy?? Daddy?? Can I have THIS for Christmas??" Their young son begged.

"No, son, we can't afford that this year. Maybe next year." His dad responded. I could see the sadness in their eyes as they gathered their boy and attempted to distract him with the promise of interesting things down the next isle.

I looked up at my parents and saw a sadness overcome them. Then their expressions changed, as the little family disappeared down the next isle.

My sweet dad, Don McGuire, holding my pet duck, Darby Dolittle

"Are you thinking what I'm thinking?" My mom asked my dad.

"You bet. Let's do it." My dad replied.

My mom and dad quickly grabbed the red, electric car, leaving our full shopping car behind, and hurried to the front of the store. They grabbed the nearest manager and excitedly whispered instructions to him, pulling him into each isle as subtly as they could until they were able to find the little family and point them out to the manager.

They handed the manager their credit card, then the three of us hid behind a large display well away from the registers where my parents were sure we couldn't be spotted.

Then we waited.

I will never forget standing there for ten or so minutes, waiting for that little family to come to the register. I'll never forget my mom and dad's arms around me as we huddled in a circle, anxiously awaiting the moment.

Finally the family got their turn at the register.

My sweet mom, Elsie McGuire, holding Luna as a puppy

We couldn't hear what was said from where we were. We could only see what took place.

The manager approached them as they were paying for their meager, few items they had in their basket. He rolled the little, red, electric car up to them. We saw him explaining the situation to them. Suddenly, they were looking around the store with expressions of sheer joy and disbelief, trying to locate who could have possibly done this.

We remained hidden as we watched their sheer joy, excitement and disbelief over what was happening. Then we got to see the little boy let out a squeal of pure joy as he hopped in his new toy car and started driving it down the front of the store. The father and mother hugged each other, still looking around to find the people that had done this.

I will never forget my parents' arms around me in that moment. I will never forget watching this scene unfold. And I will never forget, looking up at my parents' faces, with tears flowing down my own cheeks, seeing their tears also falling freely over their wide smiles.

"Merry Christmas." My dad said to my mom and me.

"Merry Christmas." My mom and I replied in unison.

Of all the wonderful things my parents taught me during my childhood, there is nothing I can think of that even compares to what they taught me that Christmas in Toys R' Us. And of all the wonderful gifts I was given over the years, there is not one, single thing that compares to the gift they gave me that day.

For in that moment, my parents taught me how to achieve the truest, deepest of joys. And for that, I am a better person and eternally grateful.

I love you mom and dad.

Thank you so much for being you.

In honor of my dad, Don McGuire, who is no longer on this Earth but always with us in our hearts, and my mom, Elsie McGuire, who is 87 this July and going strong!